

CUBA AS AMERICA'S BACK DOOR: THE CASE OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION

Margalit Bejarano

Introduction

The history of Jewish immigration into Cuba is closely related to the restrictive policy imposed by the United States in the early 1920s, when new laws allotted particularly small quotas to Eastern European countries—the largest source of Jews seeking refuge across the ocean. Confronted by the heavy barriers on the gates of entry to the US, the large currents of Jewish emigrants were forced to sidetrack in search of new alternatives for settlement, or for transit stations, that would bring them closer to their Promised Land. Cuba thus emerged on the global map of Jewish migrations on the periphery of the large flow of emigration towards the US. Apart from the fact that it came into being as a consequence of US Quota Acts, the course of Jewish immigration to Cuba was influenced by the geographical proximity and the close political and economic ties between the two countries.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship between the US Quota Acts and Jewish immigration to Cuba in the 1920s from four different angles: (1) Cuba's immigration policy and the factors determining the general flow of immigration; (2) Cuba as seen by East European Jewish immigrants; (3) the attitude of Jewish-American welfare organizations as reflected by the Jewish Committee for Cuba; and (4) the policy of the US Consulate General in Havana.

1. Cuba as a Country of Immigration

Under Spain's colonial domination, Cuba was subject to restrictive immigration laws that limited entry almost exclusively to immigrants from Spain or to a cheap labor force recruited for the cane fields, mainly African slaves and Chinese contract laborers. With the US military occupation (1898-1901), and in particular after the attainment of political independence (1902), Cuba opened its gates to free immigration from Europe, and guaranteed the religious freedom of its inhabitants.¹ The basic law defining Cuba's immigration policy, Military Order no. 155 of 15 May 1902, was modeled on US immigration laws. While establishing the right of free immigration it determined the exceptions whose entry would be prohibited — harmful elements (the sick, the insane, criminals and paupers), Chinese immigrants, and contract laborers.²

The most important factor determining the trend of immigration to Cuba was economic. Following the devastating effects of its wars of independence, Cuba was rehabilitated with the support of US investments directed almost exclusively to the reinforcement of the sugar industry. A main factor accelerating the development of the sugar industry was the Reciprocity Treaty between Cuba and the US (1902), which granted preferential tariffs both to Cuban sugar in the US market and to various

American products imported into Cuba. Cuba was thus able to compete with other sugar exporting countries and become the major supplier to the US.³

The expansion of the sugar industry increased the demand for labor. Due to its failure to attract immigrants from northern Europe for agricultural settlement, the government of Estrada Palma (1902-1906) was forced to surrender to the demands of the sugar growers for contract laborers from Haiti and Jamaica.⁴ The need for a cheap labor force accelerated during World War I, when the military campaigns ruined the European beet fields, thereby considerably increasing the demand for Cuban sugar on the world market. A new Immigration Act promulgated on 3 August 1917 by President Mario Garcia Menocal authorized the temporary admission of laborers and immigrants to the sugar plantations provided they did not become public charges, or otherwise jeopardize the public order, under the threat of repatriation.⁵

The price of sugar, tightly controlled by the Allies during World War I, climbed to unprecedented heights immediately afterwards, peaking in the period between December 1919 and June 1920—known as the “Dance of the Millions.” This dramatic period of uncontrolled speculation and increased investment in the sugar industry was characterized by the growth of the national income and the purchasing power of the population, which opened new opportunities for the absorption of immigrants on the island.⁶ The year 1920 marks the climax in the wave of immigration motivated by economic prosperity (see Table 1 below).

The collapse of sugar prices on the world market during the second half of 1920 had disastrous effects on Cuba, including the loss of its economic attractiveness for European immigrants. In July 1921 President Alfredo Zayas (1921-1925) signed Act no. 1404 which decreed the repatriation of contract labourers from Haiti and Jamaica, as they had become public charges.⁷

Sugar prices rose slightly from 1922 to 1924, but there was no market for the Cuban surplus at a time when the European beet industry was recovering and US sugar consumption had reached stability; 1925 saw a renewed decline in sugar prices. In 1926 President Gerardo Machado (1925-1933) announced his program limiting sugar production.⁸ The end of the *laissez-faire* period in the sugar industry marked the end of the immigration movement that had accompanied its prosperity. Moreover, the world economic crisis of 1929 on had disastrous effects on Cuba, throwing it into a period of political and social turmoil. Comparison of sugar prices and the number of immigrants shows a direct correlation between the sugar market and the course of immigration to Cuba.

Analysis of the immigrants’ countries of provenance during the period of expanding sugar production shows that of the European countries only Spain considered Cuba a major destination for emigration; emigrants from other countries preferred the United States as long as it maintained an open-door policy. One of the main factors directing Spanish emigrants towards Cuba was the existence of a Spanish colony, established during the colonial era, whose population was the core

of the local urban middle class. The cultural and familial ties with the homeland, and the network of welfare organizations established according to the regions of origin in Spain, served as a framework for the economic adjustment and social integration of the scores of Spanish immigrants arriving in Cuba annually.⁹

Table 1
Sugar Prices and Immigration (1902-1927)¹⁰

Year	Price per Pound (in cents)	Number of Immigrants
1902	1.93	11,986
1905	2.89	54,219
1909	2.62	31,286
1913	2.05	43,507
1916	4.47	55,121
1919	5.18	80,488
1920	12.13	174,221
1921	3.22	58,948
1922	2.92	25,993
1924	3.94	85,288
1927	2.76	31,414
1929	1.72	17,179
1930	1.23	12,219
1931	1.11	2,796

Between 1902 and 1920, Spaniards were the largest group of immigrants, constituting approximately 68% of the total immigration to Cuba. The second largest group—almost 20%—consisted of colored immigrants from Haiti and Jamaica, with only a limited flow of immigrants arriving from the United States, the Ottoman Empire, and Western Europe (see Table 2 below); among these were the first Jewish immigrants.

A small group of Jews, either born or naturalized in the United States, settled in Cuba during the American military occupation and throughout the expansion of the sugar industry. Some represented American firms, while others were tradesmen, particularly in the garment business. In 1906 they organized their own religious community, but economically and socially they formed part of the American colony established in Cuba at that time.

The second group of Jewish immigrants was composed of *Sepharadim* from the Ottoman Empire, mainly young men fleeing military service after the Young Turks

Revolution (1909). Coming largely from the European parts of Turkey, they were attracted to Cuba by the language, similar to their Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) mother tongue. Like other immigrants from the Ottoman Empire, mainly Syrian and Lebanese Christians, they made their living as peddlers or small merchants on the outskirts of Havana or throughout the new sugar centers that developed in the eastern provinces of the island.¹¹

With the decrease in the overall number of immigrants to Cuba, there was also a change in the composition of the countries of origin. While the largest number of immigrants (45%) still came from Spain, other countries, which had hardly had any connection with Cuba prior to 1920, began to appear on the statistical records. These included five Eastern European countries—Poland, Russia, Rumania, Hungary, and Lithuania—where a high percentage of the emigrants were Jews.

Table 2
Immigration to Cuba from Selected Countries¹²

Country	1902-1920	Percent	1921-1930	Percent
Total	854,278		421,989	
Spain	583,598	68.0	189,315	45.0
Haiti	* 75,575	8.8	113,449	26.9
Jamaica	* 82,195	9.6	38,712	9.2
Syria	4,648	0.5	5,635	1.3
Turkey	3,480	0.4	3,112	0.7
Italy	3,692	0.4	6,653	1.6
Greece	664		2,872	0.7
Poland	29		8,704	2.0
Russia	391		4,453	1.1
Rumania	38		2,321	0.5
Hungary	0		1,384	0.3
Lithuania	4		1,107	0.3

* Figures for 1911-1920 only.

The yearly fluctuation in the immigration figures from Eastern European countries cannot be solely attributed, however, to changes in the sugar industry; in 1920, when the sugar industry was at the height of its prosperity, only 28 immigrants from the abovementioned five countries entered Cuba. A year later, following the enactment of the first restrictive quota law in the US, their number increased to almost 1,100. With the legislation of the Immigration Act of 1924, which drastically limited their

entry into the US, the number of Eastern European émigrés entering Cuba rose to approximately 8,900.¹³ While Cuban statistics do not contain any data about the religious affiliation of the immigrants, it is estimated that the proportion of Jews among the immigrants varied from 70 to 90 percent among Polish immigrants to 50 percent among immigrants from Rumania.¹⁴

For the Cuban authorities it was no secret that the chosen destination of the immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean countries was the US, and that Cuba was becoming a center of illegal traffic to the US. However, as long as the immigrants did not abuse its hospitality, Cuba did not attempt to alter its former immigration policy; it condemned, nonetheless, the use of the country as a stepping stone for illegal entry into the US. According to a memorandum prepared by the Secretary of the Treasury, Cuba's consistent policy, in accordance with the requests of the "friendly nation" in the North, was to deport aliens caught illegally entering the US, and it rejected the appeals of the ambassadors of Italy, Portugal, Spain, and France who intervened on their behalf.¹⁵

President Machado's immigration policy found expression in an interview for the New York daily *Forverts* in which he declared his support for Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe as it would promote the development of new industries, with the help of their brethren in the United States:

My government views with sympathy every honest and diligent immigrant. Our laws do not discriminate between native and foreign-born residents of the republic ... the most important problem that concerns us at this moment is the building of industry.¹⁶

Machado's program to diversify the Cuban economy failed, as a result of the world economic crisis that prevented the attraction of foreign investors—including American Jews. A proposal for a new "Law for Immigration and Colonization," prepared in 1930, reveals the attempt of the Cuban government to formulate a new immigration policy based on the country's economic needs. While retaining the principle of open immigration for Europeans, the project awarded priority to the natives with regard to agricultural settlement, recommending the attraction of "good immigration" only after the employment of Cuban-born agricultural workers had been guaranteed.¹⁷

The above proposal was not ratified by the president, and Cuba's immigration policy remained unchanged until the revolution of 1933. European immigrants continued to enter freely, the only formal requirement being that they possess at least \$30. Official statistics indicate, however, that immigrants who did not possess that sum were also allowed into the country;¹⁸ thus Cuba's gates remained open throughout the 1920s.

2. Cuba in the Eyes of Eastern European Jews

Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe peaked in the period from 1901 to 1914. According to Mark Wischnitzer, 1,602,441 Jews, most of them from Russia, Rumania, and Galicia emigrated during these years—84% of them to the US.¹⁹ Like other emigrants, they were driven to leave their countries of origin by the difficult economic situation, exacerbated by a growing population surplus that resulted from a large natural increase; similarly, they were attracted to the US by the material success of their predecessors. In addition, Jewish emigration was motivated by political and economic discrimination, anti-Semitic persecution, and bloody pogroms; having lost hope for the improvement of conditions in their countries of origin, Jewish migration was directed one way.²⁰

The flow of Jewish emigration, stemmed during World War I, was vigorously renewed immediately afterwards, as a result of the disastrous situation caused by the war and the ensuing political transformations. Although the Soviet Revolution abolished legal discrimination towards the Jews, it ruined the economic base of their existence; the Civil War and the brutal pogroms in the Ukraine destroyed hundreds of Jewish communities, and their inhabitants sought refuge in Rumania, Poland, and the Baltic States. Since these countries did not welcome the Jews, the sole hope for the refugees was emigration overseas.

Although the peace treaties following World War I apparently guaranteed the rights of the Jewish minority in the Eastern European countries, their governments, wishing to promote the interests of their national ethnic groups, adopted a discriminatory policy towards the Jews. Government supported anti-Semitism in Poland (which included formerly Russian and Austro-Hungarian areas) not only prevented the employment of Jews in the public services and barred them from the pursuit of academic studies, but brought about the systematic displacement of the Jews from their previous economic positions as traders and artisans as well.

At a time when the only feasible solution for the situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe seemed to be emigration, the US changed its liberal immigration policy and enacted quota laws, thus drastically limiting the number of those eligible to enter its gates. The first Quota Act limited the annual rate of immigration to 3 percent of the foreign-born of each nationality that had resided in the US in 1910; the Quota Act of 1924 further limited the quota to 2% of each nationality, according to the census of 1890.²¹ Thus, the number of Jews entering the US decreased from 120,000 in 1921 to a yearly average of 50,000 after the first Quota Act, and of 10,000 after the Immigration Act of 1924.²² Thousands of Jews already on their way to the US were trapped in European ports of exit. Unable to travel to the land of their hopes and dreams or to return to their native lands, they were forced to seek new alternatives.

The desperate emigrants were easy prey for unscrupulous travel agents and shipping companies who lured them to Mexico and Cuba with the promise that

subsequent travel from there to the US would be easy. Some of them were involved in the illegal trafficking of immigrants across the American border.²³ A Jewish newspaper in Buenos Aires reported that several immigrants went to Cuba because they had heard it was under American control: "They soon discovered their error; it is as difficult to get a visa for their passports from the American Consulate [in Havana] as in Riga or Warsaw."²⁴

The first Quota Act of May 1921 granted the right of non-quota immigration to aliens who had lived in Cuba, or any other American country, for at least one year.²⁵ A year later the period of residence was increased to 5 years, and in 1924 the privilege was abolished altogether. Jewish emigrants, however, continued to view Cuba as a transit country, deluded by rumors and false information about the easy passage from there to the land of their dreams. Despite warnings published by both Jewish welfare organizations and the US consulates in Europe, Jewish immigrants continued to pour into Cuba. In August 1922 their number was estimated at 2,000; by the fall of 1924 it had reached 5,000.²⁶

Cuba did not extend a warm welcome to its transit passengers—the language was strange and the heat unbearable. Those who could not prove that they possessed \$30 were detained in the Tiscornia camp (the Cuban Ellis Island) until released by relatives or by representatives of Jewish organizations. Employment was very difficult to find because of the economic crisis, and some immigrants were forced to sleep in parks as they were unable to pay the rent even in the cheap hotels of the red light district near the port. While several immigrants started earning a living by peddling cheap wares, others bided their time and lived on allowances from their relatives in the US, in the hopes of receiving the long yearned-for visa.²⁷

One outlet for the disappointed immigrants arriving in Cuba was illegal entry into the US. While wandering in the central park they were often accosted by smugglers promoting illegal transport to the US via small fishing boats. There is no statistical data and very little general information about this phenomenon in Jewish sources, which concentrate on those cases where the attempts ended in disaster, with immigrants lost at sea or treated violently by smugglers. More frequently, immigrants either fell victim to scoundrels who brought them back to Cuban shores after taking their money, or were caught by US port authorities upon reaching Florida.²⁸ The diary of M. Freilich reveals the story of fifteen emigrants (ten of them Jews) who wandered for five days in a small motor launch in a stormy sea without food or water, some on the verge of insanity; left to be drowned on the shores of Florida, they were rescued by the American coast guard and jailed.²⁹

The majority of Jewish immigrants, however, preferred the legal solution, and although they did not abandon the American dream, they started to cope with the new environment. Some found temporary work as stevedores at the ports or as railroad construction workers, but most worked either as peddlers, shoemakers, or tailors, trades that became the backbone of Jewish economic life in Cuba. Jews

began establishing factories for the manufacture of shoes and clothing, where Jewish immigrants could find work upon their arrival in Cuba. Not only was this an important factor in the economic and social integration of Jews, it also reflects the change in their psychological attitude towards Cuba.

In 1925, the Eastern European Jews in Cuba initiated cultural activities and established their own institutions. The concept of Cuba as a way-station between Europe and the US gradually changed into an awareness that the Jewish community of Cuba was an established fact. Although many Jews continued to be listed in the US Consulate, and although emigration to the US remained a major obstacle to the consolidation of the newly founded institutions, Jews formed an emotional identification with Cuba and its Jewish community. Upon receiving his visa in 1931, Jewish novelist Pinchas Berniker wrote that this was the realization of a sweet dream he had cherished for six years. When the dream came true, it lost its sweetness.³⁰

3. The Jewish Committee for Cuba

The Eastern European immigrants arriving in Cuba in early 1921 found two local communities who maintained only minimal contact—the American, and the Sephardi communities. The former was well-off economically, but had only between twenty to thirty active members; the latter had to cope with its own refugee problem since in addition to the Eastern European Jews, a large wave of destitute immigrants from Turkey had arrived in Cuba as a consequence of US quota laws.³¹

The first Eastern European Jews appearing on the streets of Havana, hungry, weak, and in rags, were survivors of the pogroms in the Ukraine. The small local American community—The United Hebrew Congregation—offered them food and shelter, and their women's charity—The Ezra Society—took care of the sick, supplied milk for the children, and protected single women.³² But, in view of the continuous flow of destitute immigrants they soon realized that their devotion and good will notwithstanding, they were unable to cope with the burden of the refugees entering Cuba, and they approached Jewish welfare organizations in the US for assistance.³³

In August 1921 HIAS's first representatives — Albert Rosenblatt and Joseph Marcus —arrived in Cuba. Together with members of the local American group (Joseph Steinberg, David Blis, Maurice Schechter, A. Muldavin, Louis Djurick, Charles Berkowitz and others), they founded a HIAS branch in Havana. With subsidies received from the Joint Distribution Committee [JDC] in New York they were able to rent lodging for refugees, supply cheap or free food, and grant small loans allowing immigrants to engage in peddling.³⁴ Although Cuba served as a transit station to the US at that time, the welfare organizations in New York sought to alleviate the difficult conditions in Cuba by granting emergency aid. However, apparently neither HIAS nor the JDC considered Cuba a desirable destination or transit station, and their representatives sent cables to Europe warning against continued immigration to Cuba.³⁵

The legislation of the Quota Act of 1924 convinced US Jewish welfare organizations that passage from Cuba to the US was ultimately blocked. Thus they changed their policy from temporary, basically philanthropic assistance, into a well-studied program of social help, whose main objective was to aid the immigrants living in Cuba to remain there permanently, in order possibly prevent their illegal entry into the US.

In April 1924, Cecilia Razovsky and Vera Shimberg, representatives of the National Council of Jewish Women, arrived in Havana in order to study the situation of Jewish refugees which was reported to be desperate.³⁶ Their report served as a basis for the foundation of a special organ, called the Jewish Committee for Cuba [JCC], composed of representatives of HIAS, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Emergency Refugee Committee. Walter Monteser, the designated head of the JCC's office, was sent to Havana in July 1924.³⁷

In a July 1924 cable, Monteser urged the HIAS office in New York to finance the repatriation of refugees whose situation seemed hopeless; between July and October of that year 22% of the JCC's expenses went to repatriation.³⁸ It was soon discovered, however, that the refugees' problem could not be solved by a remigration to the countries from which they had fled, where some were liable to military service. The JCC limited repatriation only to extreme cases of inadaptability, assuming that lack of support for their continuous wanderings would induce immigrants to cope with the difficulties in Cuba.³⁹

Harry Viteles, who studied the immigrant situation in early 1925, wrote in his detailed report that in addition to the difficult economic situation in Cuba and its harsh climate, the main obstacle preventing the Cubanization of Jews was psychological — the desire of the immigrants to reach the US, where they had family and friends.⁴⁰

Following Viteles' recommendations, the JCC emphasized the economic rehabilitation of the immigrants, dedicating most of its welfare resources to loans without interest, destined for the opening of small scale trade or industry. In addition, the JCC supported the foundation of Jewish institutions, and subsidized social, religious, and educational institutions.⁴¹ The intention of the Jewish Committee for Cuba was to help Cuban Jews stand on their own feet. After the Committee's official dissolution in 1927, its functions were assumed by the *Centro Israelita de Cuba*—an organization founded by Eastern European Jews.

Summing up its policy towards the immigrants, Morris Lewis, who succeeded Monteser as director of the Jewish Committee for Cuba, wrote: "It was necessary to help them dig their roots into the new environment, generally against their desire, so that they would gradually be weaned away from the mirage only ninety miles away."⁴²

4. The Attitude of the American Consulate

The American Consulate General in Havana considered the immigrants arriving in Cuba from Eastern Europe and the Middle East a direct menace to the US immigration laws. Officials at the Consulate were convinced that each immigrant entering Cuba from these regions would try to proceed to the US, either legally or illegally, and felt it their duty to fight the entry of Jewish immigrants into the US on both fronts.

In a memorandum Vice Consul Hernan Vogenitz commented that the provision of the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1922 granting immigrants non-quota status after a year's residence in Cuba, attracted "many thousands of intending immigrants...hoping to enter the US more easily than from their home districts." In 1928, when the US Consulate General called for the re-registration of immigrants wishing to enter the US, it was found that their number had been reduced by 80%. The Vice Consul interpreted this reduction as reflecting the diminished hopes of the immigrants for legal admittance to the US, and as evidence of the existence of an illegal alternative. According to Vogenitz's calculations, 14,000 immigrants entered the US illegally from Cuba throughout the 1920s,⁴³ and though he realized that this figure might have been exaggerated, he was sure that "thousands of these people have been smuggled into the US unlawfully." The Consul General had no doubts as to the origin of those seeking entry into the US: "Most of the aliens who came to Cuba from Poland, Rumania, Russia, Armenia, Palestine, Syria and Turkey are of Jewish extraction, and by reason of the aid and influence of protective organizations in the US offer the greatest problem in connection with the enforcement of the Immigration Act of 1924."⁴⁴

According to the records of the US Consulate General, 5,245 immigration visas were granted during the five-year period 1929/30 to 1933/34 — 2,907 to Cubans and 2,338 to aliens. Consul General Cameron pointed out that 1,029 of the visas were granted to aliens from Eastern Europe (among them 418 from Russia and 319 from Poland), although they numbered only 1.6% of the alien population.⁴⁵ While those immigrants "can scarcely be considered as desirable," the Consul stated that they were able to enter the US legally, through loopholes in the immigration laws, as relatives or spouses of American citizens, and complained that although the sincerity of their applications was suspect, "it is often legally impossible for the Consulate General to refuse to grant them visas."⁴⁶

Consul General Dumont, whose reports were not devoid of anti-Semitic overtones, argued that most of the marriages between foreigners and naturalized American citizens were fictitious. Persons born in Eastern Europe or the Middle East, "in which nearly all of the persons interested are of the Jewish faith...have little or no regard to the sanctity of an oath and are willing to perjure themselves on any and all occasions if perjury will serve to bring the desired end."⁴⁷

US officials in Havana reported to the State Department that aliens who had been refused a visa to the US applied for both Cuban citizenship and Cuban passports, in order to enter the US as visitors. They procured lists of these naturalized aliens and warned US authorities that “certainly Cuban citizens of Polish origin will take advantage of their right to enter the United States to disappear while in that country.”⁴⁸ Although we have no concrete evidence that the US demanded that the Cuban government abstain from granting citizenship to aliens, Jewish sources indicate that Machado’s government had intentionally been avoiding approval of the applications of 1,500 Jews for Cuban citizenship.⁴⁹

The attempts of the US Consul to intervene in Cuban immigration policy are clearly reflected in the letter of American Consul William Jackson to the head of the Visa Office in Washington: “The Cuban State Department has drafted an immigration law which, if passed, may greatly lessen immigration from most countries of Europe, which will be a great help to the US... the Cuban State Department was willing to insert any clauses in the law which might be to the advantage of the US in checking immigration.”⁵⁰ In fact, the Bill for Colonization and Immigration (cited in chapter 1 above) contained the following clause: “Every immigrant embarking clandestinely for whatever friendly state who is returned to Cuba will be deported to his country of origin.”⁵¹

Consul Dumont reported to Washington about a new directive to steamship companies from the Cuban Immigration Commissioner, Pedro Cartaya, requiring each immigrant to deposit \$200 before disembarkation. Confidentially, Dumont admitted “that this measure is the result of many conferences between this office and Señor Cartaya in an endeavor to control the immigration into Cuba of persons, who immediately upon their arrival, either marry American citizens or apply for visas at the Consulate General.”⁵² Further restrictions on immigration into Cuba were revoked by the Cuban Secretary of the Treasury. According to Dumont’s report, Immigration Commissioner Cartaya informed him confidentially that the revocation was caused by extreme pressure brought to bear by the Spanish Embassy in Havana, by the Havana agents of steamship companies, and by Jewish societies in Havana.⁵³ Of these three pressure groups Dumont considered the Jews as having the greatest influence on the Cuban authorities. He attributed to the newly arrived Eastern European Jews political power that they were far from possessing, and presented the *Centro Israelita de Cuba* as the major obstacle to the restriction of immigration. It seems clear that the American Consulate in Havana was using its political clout to curtail further entry of Jewish immigrants into Cuba.

Conclusions

The enactment of the Quota Acts by the United States was the underlying cause for the immigration of Eastern European Jews to Cuba. Cuba was perceived by these immigrants as a transit station on the way to the US, and although they were gradually

compelled to accept Cuba as a permanent home, the shadow of the American dream continued to be a dominant factor in their history, hindering the process of adaptation.

Following the enactment of the first Quota Act, American Jewish welfare organizations shared this view of Cuba as a transit station, but nevertheless tried to stop the emigrants from choosing Cuba. Unable to block the entry of Jewish immigrants into Cuba yet wishing to comply with US immigration policy, they supported the creation of a new Jewish community in order to prevent these immigrants from entering the US.

Seen from the Cuban perspective, American restrictive policy had little influence on the government's immigration policy or on the direction of immigration, determined primarily by internal economic factors; it had, however an effect on the ethnic composition of the immigrant population, and on the political pressure exercised by US officials, in particular with regard to the smuggling of immigrants from Cuban shores.

Like Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, officials of the US Consulate in Havana regarded Cuba as America's back door. While the former entered Cuba in the hopes of using that door as a passage to the US, the latter tried to block their entrance by intervening in Cuban immigration policy in order to further limit Jewish immigration into Cuba.

While Cuban authorities maintained an open door policy, with no linkage to US restrictive policy, American Jewish welfare organizations tried to limit immigration of Jews to Cuba as well as to the US, in an attempt to counteract the image of Cuba as America's back door.

NOTES

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1. Duvon C. Corbitt, "Immigration in Cuba," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 22 (1942): pp. 280-308.
2. C.R. Cameron, "Trend of Migratory Movements in Cuba," 29 September 1934, National Archives (NA) 837.55/142, p. 33 (hence: Cameron's Memorandum, 1934); Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, (Havana, 1969), vol. 2, pp. 199-201.
3. Julio J. Le Riverend Brusone, "Historia economica," in: *Historia de la Nación Cubana* (Havana, 1952), vol. 9, pp. 289-296; Jose R. Alvarez-Díaz et al., *A Study on Cuba* (Coral Gables: University of Miami, 1965), pp. 235-245; Report of the Commission on Cuban Affairs, *Problems of the New Cuba* (Foreign Policy Association, 1935), pp. 24-26.
4. Corbitt, "Immigration," p. 304; Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos*, p. 273; Cameron's Memorandum, 1934, p. 34.
5. Hugh Thomas, *Cuba the Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, 1971), pp. 536-541; Cameron's Memorandum, 1934, pp. 34-35; Corbitt, "Immigration," p. 307.
6. Thomas, *Cuba*, pp. 530-544; Louis E. Aguilar, *Cuba 1933, Prologue to Revolution* (Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 40-43.
7. Decreto numero 1404, Gaceta Oficial 22 de julio de 1921; see also Decreto num. 1644, signed by President Machado on 18 October 1926; Gaceta Oficial, 27 de octubre de 1926.

8. Thomas, *Cuba*, p. 557; Alvarez-Díaz, *A Study on Cuba*, pp. 235, 300.
9. Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, *Cuba vista por el emigrante español* (Madrid, 1987); Imre Ferenczi, *International Migrations* (New York, 1969), p. 134.
10. Data on sugar prices is taken from Alvarez-Díaz, pp. 235, 347 (who quotes the *Anuario Azucarero de Cuba*, 1959); official immigration statistics appear in the annual publication: República de Cuba, Secretaría de Hacienda, Sección de Estadísticas, *Inmigración y movimiento de pasajeros* (hence: *Inmigración y movimiento*). For the 1902-1929 period, see Hernan C. Vogenitz, "The American Immigration Problem with Special Reference to Conditions in Cuba," March 1930, NA 837.55/95 (hence: Vogenitz Memorandum, 1930). Figures for the years 1901-1924 appear in Imre Ferenczi, *International Migrations* (New York, 1969), p. 523.
11. Margalit Bejarano, "Los Sefaradies, Pioneros de la inmigración judía a Cuba," *Rumbos* 14 (October 1985): pp. 107-122.
12. Calculations are based on data in Cameron's Memorandum, 1934, pp. 3-5.
13. *Inmigración y movimiento*, 1920-1930.
14. According to the calculations of Harry Viteles and Morris Lewis, the proportion of Jews among immigrants of the same origin was as follows: Poland — 70%, Russia — 70%, Lithuania — 80%, Hungary — 60%, Rumania — 50% (see "Report of the Director of the Jewish Committee for Cuba," appendix to Harry Viteles, Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration in Cuba [New York, 1925 — typewritten], pp. 12, 38-39). According to Polish sources, cited by Lestschinsky, Jews numbered between 85% and 95% of Polish emigrants to Cuba in the 1926-1935 period (Jacob Lestschinsky, "National Groups in Polish Emigration," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 [April 1943]: pp. 110-111). See also: *Di Yidishe Emigratzie*, no. 3 (April 1925): p. 27.
15. Secretaría de Hacienda a la Secretaría de la Presidencia, 9 de enero 1924, Archivo Nacional de Cuba (hence: ANC), Presidencia, 121/22; idem, 2 de octubre 1925, Presidencia 115/106.
16. B. Botvinik, "What the President of Cuba says about Jewish Immigrants" (in Yiddish), *Forverts*, 29 November 1927, p. 3; *Oyfgang*, 25 November 1927, p. 2.
17. Proyecto de Ley de Inmigración y Colonización, 7 de marzo 1930, ANC, Presidencia 48/42.
18. According to the figures for 1927, for example, 582 immigrants from Poland, 186 from Russia, and 102 from Lithuania entered Cuba with \$30, versus 166 immigrants from Poland, 25 from Lithuania and 50 from Russia who entered without \$30, *Inmigración y movimiento*, 1927.
19. Mark Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety* (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 98.
20. Jacob Lestschinsky, "Jewish Migrations 1840-1956", in Louis Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion* (New York, 1960), vol. 2, pp. 1545 ff.; Arie Tartakower, *Nedudei Hayehudim baolam* (Jerusalem, 1947); Arie Gartner, "Hahagira hahamonit shel yehudei Eyropah, 1881-1914," in: *Hagira vehityashvut be-yisrael u-baamim* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 343-345.
21. William S. Bernard, *American Immigration Policy* (New York, 1950), pp. 24-25.
22. Liebman Hersch, "International Migrations of the Jews," in: Walter F. Willcox, ed., *International Migrations* (New York, 1969), pp. 474-475; Lestschinsky, "Jewish Migrations," p. 1556; Wischnitzer, *To Dwell in Safety*, pp. 154-155.
23. Marcin Kula, "La inmigración polaca en Cuba en el periodo de entreguerras," *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí* (enero-abril 1980), p. 136; Joseph Marcus, "Publicity Release in Lithuania" (c. 1922), Joint Distribution Committee [JDC], file 181.
24. R. Masbir, "Carta de Cuba" *Israel*, 20 May 1921. My thanks to Efraim Zadoff for copying articles from that paper in Buenos Aires.
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26. Centro Macabeo — Asociación Hebrea para auxiliar al inmigrante en Cuba, Activities Report, 31 August 1922, JDC file 181. For a report on Polish non-Jews, see, Kula, "La inmigración polaca," pp. 131-140. From Huret to Griggs, 5 December 1924, HIAS-HICEM, series I, file XIV, Cuba 7, Yivo Archives (hence: HIAS-HICEM); *New York Times*, 19 October 1924, p. 29, col. 3; *JTA Bulletin*, 9 December 1924; Harry Viteles, *Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration in Cuba*, p. 2 (b), 6.

27. Joseph Marcus, "Publicity Release in Lithuania"; Steinberg to Lucas, 10 January 1922, JDC file 181; *Israel*, num. 299, 7 de Iyar 7682 (1922), pp. 17-18; F. Valbe, "Der Gilgul fun Nemen," *Havaner Lebn*, 19 October 1934, p. 12; "Jewish Emigrants in Cuba," *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 October 1924, p. 17.
28. Eliezer Aronowski, "Zich Geshmuklt kein Amerike," *Havaner Lebn*, 3 February 1933, p. 6; *New York Times*, 12 March 1926, p. 5, col. 2; 16 September 1927, p. 25, col. 7; 1 July 1929, p. 3, col. 5; 10 July 1927, Section II, p. 9, col. 2; *Daily News Bulletin*, Jewish Telegraphic Agency [JTA], 24 February 1927, p. 5; *Havaner Lebn*, 9 December 1932, p. 11; 24 February 1933, p. 4; 14 July 1933, p. 4; *Forverts*, 2 February 1927, p. 1.
29. Mordechai (Maximo) Freilich, Accn. 33187, Yivo Archives, New York. Attached to the diary is a clipping from *Forverts*, 5 April 1931, written by Freilich under a false name while he was in jail.
30. P. Berniker, "Zei Gezunt," *Dos Yiddishe Vort*, no.1 (December 1931): p. 16.
31. Asociación Unión Israelita Chevet Ahim, *Memoria Anual 1924*, Leizer Ran Collection, Yivo Archives, New York.
32. Memorandum of Jewish Immigration into Cuba, 29 November 1921, JDC file 181; Steinberg to Lucas, 10 January 1922, JDC file 181; *Israel*, 20 May 1921, p. 9; David Blis, "Farzaichnungen fun Yidishn Lebn in Kuba," *Havaner Lebn*, 29 May 1936, p. 8.
33. David Blis to Louis Marshall, 9 January 1922, JDC file 181.
34. Boris Sapir, *The Jewish Community of Cuba* (New York, 1948), pp.59-60, 89; Harry Viteles, *Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration in Cuba*, p. 34; Steinberg to Lucas, 10 January 1922, and Steinberg and Muldavin to Shohan, 28 February 1922, JDC file 181; Centro Macabeo, Activities Reports, 30 April 1922 and 31 August 1922, JDC file 181.
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36. JTA, 24 April 1924, p. 5; Viteles, *Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration*, p. 65.
37. Sapir, "Djuish Committee For Kuba," p. 68.
38. Montser to Bernstein, 3 July 1924, HIAS-HICEM, I, XIII, Cuba 5; JCC Trial Balance, 31 October 1924, HIAS-HICEM, I, XIII, Cuba 10.
39. Montser to New York, 29 October 1924; Azofsky to Montser, 24 October 1924 and 10 November 1924; Montser to Bressler, 15 June 1925, HIAS-HICEM, I, XIII, Cuba 5; Viteles, *Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration*, p. 29.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.
41. Sapir, "Djuish Committee For Kuba," pp. 65-71; *Idem*, *The Jewish Community*, pp. 22-24, 58-64.
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44. Vogenitz, "The American Immigration Problem," p. 43.
45. Cameron's Memorandum, 1934, pp. 44-45.
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47. F.T.F. Dumont to the Secretary of State, 20 February 1931, NA 837.55/109.
48. Vogenitz, "The American Immigration Problem," p. 44; Dumont to the Secretary of State, 13 July 1931 and 9 May 1933, NA 811.11.
49. *Havaner Lebn*, 1 September 1933, p. 6; Trager to Waldman, 30 August 1939, AJC, RG 1, EXO 29, Cuba..
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51. Proyecto de Ley de Inmigración y Colonización, 7 de marzo 1930, ANC, Presidencia 48/42.
52. Dumont to the Secretary of State, 15 May 1931, NA 837.55/113.
53. Dumont to the Secretary of State, 8 September 1932, NA 837.55/128.